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THE ENEMIES OF ART AND BEAUTY.

BY HENRY HOLIDAY.



LOOK at a procession of well-to-do citizens going to their daily avocation. We can note the charming variety of form, color, and material, which is the natural expression of that individuality we all prize so greatly. But what is it we see? All dressed exactly alike—they must then certainly have found a type of dress so beautiful, so perfect, that they have voluntarily surrendered their individuality as a tribute to that perfection which cannot be excelled. Is it so? Are these black cut-away coats, these black boots, these cylindrical tubes of trousers, these black top hats, are these the ideal for which all individuality is to be sacrificed? I heard a critic of "Looking Backward" deprecate the orderly organization of the system he describes with the remark that, "under such a routine people would be like sheep." What are *these* like? Black sheep it would seem. Gloom, and the total absence of individuality are the characteristics of our system. And why this deadly uniformity, this total absence of anything to show that the wearers of these clothes, the dwellers in these houses, are anything but automata, and made to order, like the hideous and barbarous things they wear and live in? Are they all alike?

THE GREAT GODS PROFIT AND SNOB.

Talk to them in their offices and you might almost think they are; but know them intimately and you will soon find the widest differences. Why, then, cannot they show that they are thinking, rational beings, possessing here and there a stray idea of their own? Are they slaves, or what does it all mean? Yes, they are slaves, all working in chains, crushed under the tyranny of two relentless molochs, the great god Profit and the great god Snob. These two have chained up individuality, and trampled her under foot. Beauty, they have expelled from Society (with a big S.) There are one or two sanctuaries where she is still allowed a refuge, and the very few who are ever allowed by the god Profit to have a spare hour, occasionally visit her, but, if she appears in the street, the god Snob hoots her and tramples on her.

Each have their own weapons and instruments of torture. Some of the victims of Profit suffer so grievously, that they dare even to make a show of resistance. But it is futile and short-lived. He has two clubs, called Supply and Demand, and these he swings about mercilessly, and the wretched slaves are soon cowed. Occasionally a feeble protest is made by those who groan under the rule of the god Snob, but he also has two clubs—Respectability and Social Status. At the mere sight of them, down go the slaves prostrate, before their relentless idol. And meantime, poor Individualism is wasting away in her prison.

Now, to drop our metaphor, is there any exaggeration in the picture I have sketched? I am confident there is not. Imagine the effect, if we were to take any of the great pictures of Paul Veronese, a man who lived in a great business community, a mercantile state, and who drew all his images from his daily experience. Take one of his works, such as the "Marriage at Cana," and put all the figures into modern, re-

spectable costume, and you will then realize the extent to which taste has been depraved by the intervening, rapid development of the principle of competition for profit, and the growth of greed for money, to the increasing exclusion of all other interests.

That which impresses me most strongly in the study of this subject, is the extraordinary vitality for a man's love of beauty. Competition for Profit existed in the time of the great Venetian Painters, but the world was thinly populated then, and with a moderate effort, a man could live. Under these conditions, the love of Beauty still flourished, so hardy is it, that it takes long and cruel ill-treatment to suppress it. It continued to flourish, but with less and less vitality with the increasing populations, and resultant difficulty in feeding them all. The wheat was there, but the thistles and dandelions, and other coarse weeds were crowding it out. Now, the weeds have covered the whole field, and though the wheat is still there, she is hidden from the eye, stray blades here and there, seldom ripening, are all that remain.

WHERE DO ART AND BEAUTY COME IN?

Well, what has been the effect of the free fight for existence of Art? Why this, that people have enough to do to live, they have no time for anything else. They cannot stop to think of enjoyment of life; their energies are exhausted in the struggle for food, clothing, and a roof over their heads. Having, some of them, got this thing, then begins the struggle to have more than their neighbor; there is still no time to think of enjoying life, they have got to imitate the class above them. The laborer, who is successful and gets a rise in life, looks forward to the joy of wearing a shiny black chimney-pot hat. The tradesman, on whom the delights of broad-cloth and pot hats have begun to pall, struggles and wears himself out in the hope of some day riding in a carriage, and so forth, through the whole degrading series; snobbery being the guiding impulse, profit-making the efficient machine; sordid struggle for the necessities of life at the bottom of the scale, far more sordid struggle to outdo one's neighbor at the upper end of the scale.

Where do Art and Beauty come in? Where is love of good work gone? There is no time for either. "Will it pay?" is the one question, not "Do I love doing it?" Is it worth having when done? If I don't produce the largest number of articles in the short-

est time, if I don't screw my workmen down to the lowest wage they will put up with, and make my customers pay the highest price I can get out of them, I shall fall behind in the life and death struggle for profit. Beauty? What have I to do with beauty? Will beauty pay? Fashion! that's the point. Everybody is wearing this, everybody is asking for that—the other, oh, I don't keep it; I assure you, Madam, its quite gone out, no one asks for it. No one of consequence, that is.

Oh, the miserable and crawling slaves, the god Profit on one side, the god Snob on the other, ruling them with rods of iron, while Beauty, scoffed out of Society, holds her lonely state in a picture gallery. Does any one deny that this fairly describes modern treatment of Beauty. Hardly, I think, but how will Nationalism improve this state of things? You may eliminate the misery and vice, but will you not have substituted a uniformity of discipline, with an absence of personal initiative, which will be as unlikely as the present system, to result in beauty of work and individuality of idea.



DESIGN ON COVER OF "STUDIO," SHOWING ARTISTIC DRESS.